

# The BRONZE BELL

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE  
AUTHOR OF "THE BRASS BOWL," ETC.  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

## SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a duck-shooting visit with his friend Quain, comes upon a young lady who has been disappointed by her horse becoming frightened at the sudden appearance in the road of a burly Hindu. He declares he is Robert Lal Chatterji, the appointed mountaineer of the Bell. Addressing Amber as a man of high rank and pressing a mysterious little bronze bell, "The Token," into his hand, disappears in the wood. The girl calls Amber by name. He in turn addresses her as Miss Sophie Farrell, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British Diplomatic service in India and visiting the Quains. Several nights later the Quain home is burglarized and the bronze box stolen. Amber advises Quain to go hunting on an island and become lost and Amber is left marooned. He wanders about, finally reaching a cabin and recognizing as its occupant an old friend named Rutton, whom he last met in England, and who appears to be in hiding. When Miss Farrell is mentioned Rutton is strangely agitated. Chatterji appears and summons Rutton to a meeting of a mysterious body. Rutton seizes a revolver and dashes after Chatterji. He returns wildly excited, says he has killed the Hindu, takes possession and when dawn comes Amber goes to India on a mysterious errand.

## CHAPTER VI. (Continued.)

The servant brought from Rutton's leather trunk a battered black-japaned tin box, which, upon exploration, proved to contain little that might not have been anticipated. A bankbook issued by the house of Rothschild Freres, Paris, showed a balance to the credit of H. D. Rutton of something slightly under a million francs. There was American money, chiefly in gold certificates of large denominations, to the value of, roughly, \$20,000, together with a handful of French, German and English banknotes which might have brought in exchange about \$250. In addition to these there was merely a single envelope, superscribed: "To be opened in event of my death only, H. D. R." Amber broke the seal and read the enclosures once to himself and a second time aloud to Doggott. The date was barely a year old.

"For reasons personal to myself and sufficient," Rutton had written, "I choose not to make a formal will. I shall die, probably in the near future, by my own hand, of poison. I wish to emphasize this statement in event the circumstances surrounding my demise should appear to attach suspicion of murder upon any person or persons whatever. I am a widower and childless. What relations may survive me are distant and will never appear to claim what estate I may leave—this I know. I therefore desire that my body servant, Henry Doggott, an English citizen, shall inherit and appropriate to his own use all my property and effects, providing he be in my service at the time of my death. To facilitate his entering into possession of my means, whatever they may be, without the necessity of legal procedure of any kind, I enclose a cheque to his order upon my bankers, signed by myself and bearing the date of this memorandum. He is to fill it in with the amount remaining to my credit upon my bankbook. Should he have died or left me, however, the disposition of my effects is a matter about which I am wholly careless."

The signature was unmistakably genuine—the formal "H. D. Rutton" with which Amber was familiar. It was unfeigned.

The Virginian put aside the paper and offered Doggott the blank cheque on Rothschild's. "This," he said, "makes you pretty nearly independently rich, Doggott."

"Yes, sir," Doggott took the slip of paper in a hand that trembled even as his voice, and eyed it incredulously. "I've never had anything like this before, sir; I hardly know what it means."

"It means," explained Amber, "that, when you've filled in that blank and had the money collected from the Rothschilds, you'll be worth—with what cash is here—in the neighborhood of forty-five thousand pounds sterling."

Doggott gasped, temporarily inarticulate. "Forty-five thousand pounds!"

Mr. Amber, he declared earnestly, "I never looked for nothing like this. I—I never—I—" Quite without warning he was quiet and composed again. "Might I ask it of you as a favor, sir, to look after this—he offered to return the cheque—for a while, till I can make up my mind what to do with it?"

"Certainly," Amber took the paper, folded it and placed it in his card case. "I'd suggest that you deposit it as soon as possible in a New York bank for collection. In the meantime, these bills are yours; you'd better take care of them yourself until you open the banking account."

"I'll keep as well in 'ere as anywhere," Doggott considered, relocking the box. "I haven't hardly any use for money, except, of course, to tide me over till I find another position."

"What!" exclaimed Amber in surprise. "Yes, sir," affirmed Doggott respectfully. "I'm a bit too old to change my ways; a valet I've been all my life and a valet I'll die, sir. It's too late to think of anything else."

"But with this money, Doggott—"

"Beg pardon, sir, but I know; I could live easy like a gentleman if I liked—but I wouldn't be a gentleman, so what's the use of that? So the w'y I look at it, there's naught for me but

go on valeting until I'm too old; after that the money'll be a comfort, I daresay. . . . Don't you think so, sir?"

"I believe you're right, Doggott; only your common-sense surprises me. But it makes it easier in a way. . . . Amber felt thoughtful again.

"Ow's that, sir—if I may ask?" "This way," said Amber: "Before he died, Mr. Rutton asked me to do him a service. I agreed. He suggested that I take you with me."

"I'm ready, sir," interrupted Doggott eagerly. "There's no gentleman I'd like to valet for better than yourself."

"But there will be dangers, Doggott—I don't know precisely what that's the rub; we'll have to travel half-way round the world and face unknown perils. If Mr. Rutton were right about it, we'll be lucky to get away with our lives."

"I'll go, sir; it was 'is wish. I'll go with you to India, Mr. Amber."

"Very well," Amber spoke abstractedly, reviewing his plans. "But," he enquired suddenly, "I didn't mention India. How did you know—?"

"Why—I suppose I must 'ave guessed it, sir. It seemed so likely, knowing what I do about Mr. Rutton."

Amber sat silent, unable to bring himself to put a single question in regard to the dead man's antecedents. But after a pause the servant continued voluntarily.

"He always 'ad a deal to do with persons who came from India—niggers—I mean, natives. It didn't much matter where we'd be—London or Paris or Berlin or Rome—they'd 'unt 'im up; some 'e'd give money to and they'd go aw'y; others 'e'd be locked up with 'is study for hours, talking, talking. They'd 'ardly ever come the same one twice. 'E 'ated 'em all, Mr. Rutton did. And yet, sir, I always 'ad a suspicion—"

Doggott hesitated, lowered his voice, his gaze shifting uneasily to the still, shrouded figure in the corner.

"What?" demanded Amber tensely. "I alw'y's thought per'aps 'e was what we call in England a man of color, 'imself, sir."

"Doggott!" "I don't mean no 'arm, sir; it was just their 'ounding him, like, and 'is being a dark-complected man the same as them, and speakin' their language so ready, that made me think it. At least 'e might 'ave 'ad a little of their blood in 'im, sir. Things 'd seem unaccountable otherwise," concluded Doggott vaguely.

"It's impossible!" cried Amber. "Yes, sir; at least, I mean I 'ope so, sir. Not that I'd myke any difference to me, the w'y I felt towards 'im. 'E was a gentleman, white or black. I'd 've died for 'im any d'y."

"Doggott!" The Virginian had risen and was pacing excitedly to and fro. "Doggott! don't ever repeat one word of this to man or woman—while you're faithful to the memory of Mr. Rutton."

The servant stared, visibly impressed. "Very good, Mr. Amber. I'll remember, sir. I don't ordinarily gossip, sir; but you and him being so thick, and everything appening to-night so 'orrible, I forgot myself. I 'ope you'll excuse me, sir."

"God in heaven!" cried the young man hoarsely. "It can't be true!" He flung himself into his chair, burying his face in his hands. "It can't!"

Yet irresistibly the conviction was being forced upon him that Doggott had surmised aright. Circumstances backed up circumstance within his knowledge of or his experience with the man, all seeming to prove incontrovertibly the truth of what at the first blush had seemed so incredible. What did he, Amber, know of Rutton's parentage or history that would refute the calm belief of the body-servant of the dead man?

And then Amber's intelligence was smitten by a thought as by a club; and he began to tremble violently, uncontrollably, being weakened by fatigue and the strain of that endless, terrible night. A strangled cry escaped him without his knowledge: "Sophia!"

Sophia Farrell, the woman he had promised to wed, nay even the woman he loved with all his being—a half-breed, a mulatto! His mind sickened with the horror of that thought.

His very soul seemed to shudder and his reason cried out that the thing could never be. Yet in his heart of hearts still he loved her, still desired her with all his strength and will; in his heart there was no wavering. Whatever Rutton had been, whatever his daughter might be, he loved her. And more, the honor of the Ambers was in pledge, holding him steadfast to his purpose to seek her out in India or wherever she might be and to bear her away from the unnamed danger that threatened her—even to marry her, if she would have him. He had promised; his word had passed; there could now be no withdrawal.

An hour elapsed, its passing rationally emphasized by the tin clock. Amber remained at the table, his head upon it, his face hidden by his arms, so still that Doggott would have thought him sleeping but for his uneven breathing.

At length the young man called

him and Doggott found him sitting up, with a haggard and careworn face, but with the sane light of a man composed in his eyes.

"Doggott," he asked in an even, toneless voice, "have you ever mentioned to anybody your suspicion about Mr. Rutton's race?"

"Only to you, sir."

"That's good. And you won't?"

"No, sir."

"Have you," continued Amber, looking away and speaking slowly, "ever heard him mention his marriage?"

"Never, sir. 'E says in that paper 'e was a widower; I fancy the lady must have died before I entered 'is service. 'E was always a lonely man, all the 15 year I've been with 'im, keepin' very much to 'imself, sir."

Doggott disappeared to prepare a meal, but within five minutes a gunshot sounded startlingly near at hand. The Virginian's appearance at the door was coincident with a clear hall of "Aho-o-y, Amber!"—unmistakably Quain's voice, raised at a distance of not over 100 yards.

Amber's answering cry quavered with joy. And with a bear-like rush Quain topped the nearest dune, dropped down into the hollow, and was upon him.

"By the Lord Harry!" he cried, almost embracing Amber in his excitement and relief; "I'd almost given you up for good and all!"

"And I you," said Amber, watching curiously and somewhat distrustfully a second man follow Quain into the vale. "Who's that?" he demanded.

"Only Antonio. We've him to thank. He remembered this old camp here—I'd completely forgotten it—and was sure you'd taken refuge in it. Come inside." He dragged Amber in, the Portuguese following. "Let's have a look at you by the light. Lord! you seem to be pretty comfortable—and I've been worrying myself sick for fear you—"

He swept the room with an approving glance which passed over Doggott and became transfixed as it rested upon the hammock-bed with its burden; and his jaw fell.

"What's this? What's this?" He swung upon Amber, appraising with relentless eyes the havoc his night's experience had wrought upon the man. "You look like hell!" he exploded. "What's up here? Eh?"

Amber turned to Doggott. "Take Antonio out there with you and keep him until I call, please. This is Mr. Quain; I want to talk with him un-

snapped the high nervous tension which had sustained Amber. He was now on the edge of collapse and showed it plainly. But two circumstances aided him to recover his grip upon himself: Quain's compassionate consideration in forbearing to press his story from him, and Doggott's opportune appearance with a pot of coffee, steaming and black. Two cups of this restored Amber to a condition somewhat approaching the normal. He lit a cigarette and began to talk.

For all his affection for and confidence in his friend, there were things he might not tell Quain; wherefore he couched his narrative in the fewest possible words and was miserably of detail. Of the coming of the babu and his going Amber was fairly free to speak; he suppressed little if any of that episode. Moreover, he had forgotten to remove the Token from his finger, and Quain instantly remarked it and demanded an explanation. But of the nature of the errand on which he was to go, Amber said nothing; it was, he averred, Rutton's private business. Nor did he touch upon the question of Rutton's nationality. Sophia Farrell he never mentioned.

Nevertheless, he said enough to render Quain thoughtful. "You've set on this thing, I suppose?" he asked some time after Amber had concluded.

"Set upon it, dear man? I've no choice. I must go—I promised."

Quain went to the hammock-bed, turned back the sheet, and for several minutes lingered there, scrutinizing the story, upturned face.

"So!" he said, coming back. "Here's news that'll help you some. You were blind not to see it yourself. That man's was, I should say—a Rajput." He waited for the comment which did not come. "You knew it?"

"I . . . suspected, tonight."

"It's as plain as print; the mark of his caste is all over him. But perhaps he was able to disguise it a little with his manner—alive; undoubtedly, I'd say. He was a genius of his kind—a prodigy; a mental giant. That translation of the 'Tantras'—Wonderful! . . . Well, he's gone his own way: God be with him. . . . When do you want to start?"

"As soon as possible—sooner, I've not a day to lose—not an hour."

"Urgent as that, eh?" Quain

which he was pleased to christen an inspiration.

"It's this," he explained: "What do you know about Calcutta?" "Little or nothing. I've been there—that's about all."

"Precisely. Now I know the place, and I know you'll never find this goldsmith in the Machua bazar without a guide. The ordinary, common-or-garden guide is out of the question, of course. But I happen to know an Englishman there who knows more about the dark side of India than any other ten men in the world. He'll be invaluable to you, and you can trust him as you would Doggott. Go to him in my name—you'll need no other introduction—and tell him what you've told me."

"That's impossible. Rutton expressly prohibited my mentioning his name to any one in India."

"Oh, very well. You haven't, have you? And you won't have to. I'll

leave your happy home for me!

Miss Caustique—Yes, if I saw you coming and the back door wasn't locked.

FREED FROM SKIN DISEASE

"Our boy was born in Toronto on Oct. 13, 1908, and when three months old a slight rash appeared on his cheek. What appeared to be a water blister would form. When it broke, matter would run out, starting new blisters until his entire face, head and shoulders were a mass of scabs and you could not see a particle of clear skin. Other parts of his body were affected, but not to such an extent. We tried about every advertised remedy without avail, indeed some of them only added to his suffering and one in particular, the Remedy, almost put the infant into convulsions. The family doctor prescribed for him and told us to bathe the baby in buttermilk. This did not do any good, so we took him to a hospital. He was treated as an out-patient twice a week and he got worse, if anything. We then called in another doctor and inside of a week the boy was, to all appearances, cured and the doctor said his work was done. But the very next day it broke out as bad as ever."

"We decided that it could not be cured and must run its course and so we just kept his arms bandaged to his side to prevent his tearing his flesh. We left Toronto, and shortly after our arrival in Duluth, the Cuticura Remedies were recommended. We started using them in May, 1909, and soon the cure was complete. You would not think he was the same child for Cuticura made his skin perfectly clear and he is entirely free from the skin disease. There has been no return this time. We still use only Cuticura Soap for baby's bath. Robert Mann, Proctor, Minn., May 3, 1910."

Outdone.

Willis—I'm raising 500 chickens on a five-foot lot.

Gills—That's nothing. You ought to see the rest of my wife is taking care of in our flat—Puck.

A magazine poet refers to a baby in the house as a wellspring of pleasure. According to his theory triptists would be a deluge.

Takes Garfield Tea to regulate the liver and overcome constipation.

Friendship is one soul in two bodies.—Diogenes.

Libby's

Vienna

Style

Sausage

A good dish for a Luncheon or Supper.

Brown the contents of a tin of Libby's Vienna Sausages in the frying pan and serve with baked potatoes.

Easy to serve—fine to eat

Look for the Libby label which means quality.

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HARD ON CHOLLY.



Cholly Chumpleigh—Would you leave your happy home for me!

Miss Caustique—Yes, if I saw you coming and the back door wasn't locked.

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